

**FORMER NAVAL TRAINING CENTER SAN DIEGO
RESTORATION ADVISORY BOARD (RAB)
MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 24, 2004**

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NTC SAN DIEGO
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Subject: RESTORATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

The 56th Naval Training Center (NTC) Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) meeting was held on **Wednesday, March 24, 2004**, at the Point Loma Library Community Room, 2130 Poinsettia Drive, San Diego. The meeting was attended by:

RAB members: Charles Bishop, Richard Cooper, Darrell H. Johnson, Stephen Marsh, and Hugh Story (Community Co-chair).

Navy/Regulators/Contractors: Lawrence Lansdale, Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Environmental Coordinator (BEC) and RAB Navy Co-chair; Lee Saunders, Navy Environmental Public Affairs Officer; Charles Cheng, California Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) Project Manager; Sherry Komeylyan, RWQCB; Viola Cooper, US EPA Community Involvement Coordinator; and Janet Lear and Betty Schmucker, Navy contractors.

Public: Ed Brown; Kathleen Blavatt; Scott Morken; Craig Castaneda, Office of Councilman Zucchet; Mignon Scherer; Maureen Ostrye, City of San Diego Redevelopment Agency; Virginia Silverman; Linda Hollingsworth; and Robert Bregman.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Lansdale called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM and welcomed attendees. He introduced himself as the Navy RAB Co-chair and BEC (BRAC [Base Realignment and Closure] Environmental Coordinator) and Mr. Story as the RAB Community Co-chair. He commented on the nice, new meeting room and thanked Mr. Story for securing the location for the meeting. He asked that attendees introduce themselves.

Agenda Overview and Meeting Minutes Approval. Mr. Lansdale said that the objective of the evening's meeting was to discuss the status of the only remaining Navy property on former NTC, the Boat Channel. He solicited comments on the March 25, 2003, RAB meeting minutes. Mr. Johnson noted that an "l" was left off of his first name. Mr. Johnson moved to accept the minutes with the correction and Mr. Cooper seconded. The March 25, 2003, meeting minutes were adopted with the change noted.

Mr. Lansdale reviewed the evening's agenda and noted that handouts were available at the sign-in table. He said that Ms. Maureen Ostrye of the City of San Diego Redevelopment Division (City) would address the RAB during the meeting. He asked if there were any questions on or additions to the agenda. Mr. Story stressed that most of the former NTC property has been transferred to the City, and that the Boat Channel is the only remaining Navy property on former NTC and is undergoing environmental study until it is cleaned up to the satisfaction of the regulatory agencies. Therefore, the focus of the RAB meeting would be the Boat Channel.

Mr. Cooper asked that future meeting agendas provide a point of contact for information prior to the meeting. Mr. Lansdale provided his telephone number (619-532-0961), and said this will be in the meeting minutes and listed on future agendas.

STATUS OF INSTALLATION RESTORATION PROGRAM SITE 12, THE FORMER NTC BOAT CHANNEL

Mr. Lansdale outlined his presentation on Installation Restoration (IR) Program Site 12, the Boat Channel. Overheads and handouts accompanied his presentation.

IR Site 12 has been studied since 1996 and a number of reports have been produced. The Navy follows CERCLA (the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Recovery

Act of 1980, a federal law also known as "Superfund"). Mr. Lansdale outlined the CERCLA process steps and noted that the Remedial Investigation (RI) of the Boat Channel is completed and a Feasibility Study (a study that evaluates the feasibility of various cleanup alternatives, taking into consideration a number of important criteria) is in progress.

After the Feasibility Study (FS) is completed a Proposed Plan (a document that puts forth or proposes a preferred remedy, based on those evaluated in the FS) is prepared for public review and comment. After a remedy is chosen it is memorialized in a Record of Decision (ROD). Mr. Story asked if the ROD means that the agencies and the public approve the decision. Mr. Lansdale said in general, yes, although sometimes regulatory agencies (e.g., RWQCB) and the lead agency (Navy) don't always agree. All comments, however, are taken into consideration before a decision is made. Mr. Bishop asked who makes the decision if they don't agree. Mr. Lansdale said the final decision ultimately is made by the Navy, the lead agency.

Mr. Marsh noted that it took four years to get from the draft RI to the final, and wondered how long it would take to complete the final CERCLA steps. Mr. Lansdale said the length of time to finalize the Draft RI for the Boat Channel was unusual and involved agency comments, responses to those comments, and new comments with further responses. A timeline for the rest of the work would be shown at the end of the presentation.

Mr. Lansdale summarized the four-volume RI report conclusion as follows:

- The study found no unacceptable human health risk for recreational use, and the risk from consuming fish caught in the Boat Channel equaled the risk from consuming fish caught elsewhere in San Diego Bay.
- Ecological risk was considered significant in specific areas in the northern end of the Boat Channel for benthic (bay-bottom-dwelling) invertebrates (e.g., worms, mussels, and sand dollars), thus leading to the identification of specific Areas of Ecological Concern (AOECs) and potential AOECs.

Ms. Blavatt asked if the Boat Channel was safe for swimming. Mr. Lansdale said yes, as that is considered a recreational use. She reported concerns about a triathlon that was permitted and held in Mission Bay. Some of the participants afterward claimed they became ill from swimming and thought it was from the old Mission Bay landfill nearby. Mr. Story remarked that after rains, stormwater runoff occurs onto beaches and into water bodies, such as the Boat Channel, and may cause health concerns.

Mr. Lansdale continued discussing the RI conclusions. He explained that because of the ecological risk issue, an FS is being conducted to look at alternatives for addressing the bottom sediments in the northern end of the Boat Channel. The study was begun in November 2003 and an early draft is expected soon. Mr. Bishop asked about the goal of the FS. Mr. Lansdale said the goal is to develop and evaluate a variety of alternatives, including the "No Action" alternative (which is doing nothing and leaving the site as is). Alternatives could include dredging or capping the sediments, or perhaps incorporate some innovative technology. The purpose is to compare different alternatives according to criteria required by law.

Mr. Bishop asked if the RI report looked at areas within the Boat Channel that fell within MCRD property. Mr. Lansdale said yes, that chemicals of concern in the Channel do not respect property boundaries. AOECs in the Boat Channel are found on both sides of the dividing line between Navy and Marine Corps property.

The schedule for completion of the Boat Channel CERCLA studies is as follows:

- Draft Feasibility Study: Fall 2004
- Proposed Plan: Spring 2005
- Record of Decision: Fall 2005

STATUS OF FORMER NTC PROPERTY TRANSFER AND REUSE

Mr. Lansdale remarked that the goal of the RAB is to get property ready for transfer. The Navy is considering transferring the Boat Channel to the City via an "early transfer", but this idea is in the beginning stages. He introduced Ms. Maureen Ostrye to discuss the City's perspective on early property transfer.

Ms. Ostrye passed out a map showing the general development plan for Liberty Station (former NTC). She explained that the proposed NTC Park along the western shore of the northern end of the Boat Channel should be completed in 2005/06. At that time the City hopes the Boat Channel is environmentally ready for transfer, but realizes it may not be. Therefore, the City's Redevelopment Division may go to the City Council to request an early transfer of the property. Because the RWQCB and Navy have reached a stalemate on the progress of action needed on the Boat Channel, the City may want to accept the property from the Navy, in its current condition, along with a negotiated payment, and conduct cleanup or take some action itself. This may allow the Boat Channel to be used more quickly as part of the recreational area. The City has taken the step of hiring its own consultant who is reviewing all the documents and information developed on the Boat Channel and will make recommendations to the City. However, the City Council must approve the early transfer idea. Last week the Redevelopment Division approached the City's Natural Resources and Culture Committee of the City Council with the request for early transfer. The Committee requested more information and input from organizations such as the Environmental Health Coalition, Peninsula Planning Board, and others.

If an early transfer is eventually approved by the City Council, the Navy and City would enter into an Environmental Cooperative Service Agreement. A Consent Agreement would be signed between the City and the state. The Navy and the RWQCB would also sign an agreement. The process requires consultation and ultimate approval by the governor. It was noted that another parcel on NTC (the former landfill, IR Site 1) was transferred to the Unified Port District via early transfer.

Mr. Cooper asked what the role of the RAB would be in the event of an early transfer, as the Boat Channel is the last remaining piece of Navy property. Mr. Lansdale said the RAB would continue work up to the point of property transfer and then disband. Community involvement would continue, as required by law. Mr. Saunders added that a revised proposed rule that addresses the process of adjourning RABs will be published soon in the Federal Register.

Mr. Bishop inquired whether the City's consultant has the information from the RI report, whether the consultant understands the extent of the study, and that only certain benthic areas are a problem. Ms. Ostrye said the RI report has been made available and that the report conclusion is being reviewed by the consultant.

Ms. Silverman asked if the Navy is still responsible for costs of cleanup, in the event something ends up costing more than the Navy originally paid (in the event of early transfer). Ms. Ostrye explained that there will be environmental insurance covering additional cleanup (for example, in the case of the burn-ash area discovered after part of the property was transferred to the City). Then the Navy handles additional costs beyond that.

Discussion followed about Ms. Blavatt's concern over the safety of the former landfill (IR Site 1). She felt the landfill is toxic and could continue to be a source of pollutants recontaminating the Boat Channel, even if the Channel were cleaned up. A citizen's group (Save Our NTC) has concerns that the landfill was not cleaned up before the Port accepted the property and the Port has not capped one end of the property, awaiting plans for development of that area. The San Diego State University Laboratory is being built very close to the landfill. In addition, there was some confusion over the actual size of the landfill (51 acres). She recommended cleaning up the landfill before addressing the Boat Channel. Ms. Ostrye suggested contacting the Port and Airport Authority regarding concerns about IR Site 1.

Mr. Lansdale understood the concerns about recontamination of the Boat Channel, since about 33 storm drains flow into the Boat Channel from various places. Mr. Bishop asked if anyone was checking whether the landfill has leaked contaminants into the Boat Channel. Mr. Lansdale said sampling of that area of the Boat Channel did not show contaminants leaching from the landfill; in fact, that area of the Boat Channel adjacent to the landfill has better sediment quality than the northern end, where fine-grained sediments have been impacted by storm-drain effluent. Discussion ensued about permitting of sports events in the Boat Channel, media reports of Boat Channel contamination, and cleanup pre-transfer versus post-transfer. Ms. Blavatt stressed that health and safety issues must be addressed and agency/government oversight is needed.

Mr. Lansdale explained the Navy's "comeback" policy in reference to the work with McMillan (developer) and the City on the burn-ash area. If additional areas of contamination not previously identified are found, the Navy will address it, even if the property is already transferred.

Ms. Silverman asked about the RWQCB's concerns regarding the Boat Channel. Mr. Lansdale responded that science of analyzing sediment contamination has evolved over time, and the RWQCB and Navy interpret the scientific data differently.

Mr. Story elaborated on the condition of the Boat Channel. The southern two-thirds (near the mouth of the Channel) get flushed by tidal action. Eelgrass (one indicator of healthy water) grows there because it is flushed and the area is relatively shallow. The northern (closed) end is deeper with no real tidal flushing, and eelgrass doesn't grow there. The northern end is where the trouble spots (AOECs) are, and the contaminants affecting those spots have been identified and studied. The next phase is to evaluate various possible remedies and decide if remedial action is justified. He reiterated that even if the Boat Channel were cleaned up, the storm drains flowing into the Channel from various locations (e.g., Rosecrans Boulevard, Barnett Avenue, Pacific Highway, and the airport) could recontaminate it. He noted that former NTC was a training school, with less chemical use than other military facilities.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS and ANSWERS/CLOSING COMMENTS

Mr. Cheng of the RWQCB addressed public concerns over Navy and RWQCB differences in evaluating the Boat Channel data. He explained that the RI report has been back and forth among the Navy and agencies for several years. There are presently no "hard number" standards for achieving sediment cleanup. The process may be slowed down because of the many agencies involved. The agencies and the Navy have been working together and have made progress. The Navy recalculated the existing data, and the RWQCB is now waiting for input on the risk assessment conclusions from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency (NOAA) and California Department of Fish and Game. The Navy concluded that contamination is a problem in a few spots in the northern end of the Boat Channel, but the RWQCB looked at the same data and reached a different conclusion. The RAB and community will have access to RWQCB and other agency comments on the RI report. The RWQCB will work expeditiously with the Navy and City on an early transfer, if that process is pursued. The RWQCB has an obligation to enforce the California Water Code, and that is the agency's driving concern.

Mr. Bishop responded that he understood and agreed with the RWQCB's concerns but, at the same time, there must be a balance between spending taxpayer money on the process. Much money has been spent over the past 10 years. The issues should be prioritized and it must be determined whether the scale of differences between the Navy and RWQCB is large or small. He asked Mr. Lansdale why the risk management decision was removed from the RI report. Mr. Lansdale said that the risk management decision was one of the items that was keeping the report from being finalized, as it was one area of difference among the agencies. The risk management decision information is being addressed in the Feasibility Study and will be looked at as part of the alternatives evaluation. Mr. Cheng noted that the RWQCB considers cost and economics in making its cleanup decisions.

Mr. Story said that the four volumes of the Final Remedial Investigation report are in the Point Loma Library, and that the previous documents reviewed by the RAB for NTC are also there. Ms. Schmucker noted that because of limited shelf space in the old library, the information repository for the NTC documents was considered "abbreviated", but that all the documents are available through the Navy's Administrative Record File at 1220 Pacific Highway, downtown. Mr. Saunders added that the contact is Ms. Diane Silva, Records Manager, at (619) 532-3676.

Mr. Story commented that \$34 million has been spent to date on study and cleanup at NTC. Mr. Cooper asked approximate date of the next RAB meeting. Mr. Lansdale replied that the next meeting date will depend on either availability of the Feasibility Study for RAB review, or progress on the early transfer process; probably the late-summer timeframe. Mr. Cooper suggested a newsletter to the RAB outlining project milestones to keep members informed. Mr. Lansdale concurred.

There were no further questions or comments. Mr. Bishop moved to adjourn and Mr. Marsh seconded. Mr. Lansdale adjourned the RAB meeting at 7:40 PM.

*NTC RAB meeting minutes are located on the Navy's Southwest Division Environmental Web
Page at: <http://www.efdswnavfac.navy.mil/Environmental/NTCSD.htm#RABmin>*

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